



PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Alaska LGBT and Ally Nonprofits To Educate Lawmakers About Economic Realities Facing LGBT Families

“We expect more from our elected officials in their service to all Alaskans.”

Anchorage – As Alaskans and as members of Alaska’s lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) and straight ally nonprofit community, we are disappointed in the behavior of members of the Majority Caucus who laughed when a reporter, citing recent research that a majority of Alaskans support some form of same-sex relationship recognition, asked about the possibility of enacting civil unions or domestic partnerships for gay and lesbian couples.

We expect more from our elected officials in their service to *all* Alaskans.

While we appreciate that the House Majority Caucus issued an apology, the fact that some of Alaska’s elected leaders think that the lives and love of LGBT families are a laughing matter shows a callous disrespect for our humanity and a lack of understanding of the challenges faced by their constituents. Moreover, in explaining their work the Caucus stated they were focused on making lives better—not what happens in the home—displaying a fundamental misunderstanding of the economic hardships imposed on LGBT families imposed by discriminatory laws.

Unequal treatment under the law can prevent LGBT Americans from being able to fully participate in American life. With no legal protections from discrimination in employment, housing, and public accommodations, many LGBT Alaskans still live in fear of losing their livelihoods simply for being themselves—leaving us and our families vulnerable to routine discrimination. Those are realities that very much affect the quality of our economic and social lives.

Clearly we have more work to do to ensure the safety and security of our LGBT citizens—and so do our public officials. As proud Alaskans, we believe that liberty and the pursuit of happiness are core American values. Pride Foundation, Alaskans Together for Equality, Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest, and the ACLU of Alaska will all be working to educate our legislators about the need for legal protections, including civil unions, and we encourage the public to contact their lawmakers to tell them to take LGBT issues seriously and to take action to ensure fair and equal treatment of LGBT people.

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***Pride Foundation** is a donor-supported community foundation providing grants, scholarships, and community leadership in Alaska, Idaho, Montana, Oregon, and Washington State. As a catalyst for change, Pride Foundation supports transformative philanthropy, programs, and individuals that advance equality for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community. For more info visit www.pridefoundation.org.*

***Alaskans Together for Equality Inc.** is a political nonprofit whose mission is to advance civil equality for all Alaskans through grassroots organizing and advocacy, with a primary focus on lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) Alaskans.*

***Planned Parenthood Votes Northwest** promotes and protects reproductive health, rights and justice. We do this by advocating for public policies that guarantee the right to choice and full and nondiscriminatory access to reproductive health care, and fostering and preserving a social and political climate favorable to the exercise of reproductive choice through voter education, candidate endorsement and other means.*

***The American Civil Liberties Union of Alaska** represents thousands of members and activists throughout Alaska who seek to preserve and expand the individual freedoms and civil liberties guaranteed by the United States and Alaska Constitutions.*